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An Essay
On Yellow Fever
by
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of
Pennsylvania

Spencer 1872

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of
Punahoa

Introductory Remarks

We owe to the Study of History & especially to that of Medicine the Knowledge of several extraordinary Diseases, which by turns and at various intervals have overrun the globe & afflicted the Human Species: different in their principles, they ought to have, & have had different effects; some owing to local & accidental circumstances, have had but a transitory existence & have disappeared with the causes that gave birth to them; others produced by a defect which if the exposure may be allowed is identified with our being, have exercised a more profound, durable & fatal influence on the animal economy; it is to the Healing art that we owe the attenuation of some & the cessation of others; but if its efforts are always useful & often successful in combating a Disease, when it has manifested

Introduction

The first part of this work is devoted to a general
description of the country, its climate, soil, and
resources. The second part contains a detailed
account of the principal towns and cities, and
the third part describes the principal rivers and
lakes. The fourth part is a general summary of
the whole, and the fifth part contains a list of
the principal authors and works.

itself, they are impotent & perform effect against the
 force of nature, which changes, modifies, preserves
 a destiny according to our conformity to her. Con-
 tinual reaction observed by antiquity the ancients
 who made a religious dogma of it, personified by the
 supposed wrestle of the good & bad principle which
 is the allegory of it; a reaction whose effects may
 be easily modulated, but ^{not} determine whose laws & to
 destroy the cause is impossible; Conquered under
 one form she appears under another, subdued
 in one place, it diffuses itself in another; no disease
 not even the plague has sacrificed so many victims
 & now inspires such just dread, none would demand
 more the indefatigable zeal & attention of the
 Physician; none demands with more force and
 justice the vigilance & attention of all together;
 The knowledge of the nature of this scourge is
 a problem so important to solve, acquires by reason
 of its proximity, an interest which is becoming daily

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more pressing; I do not pretend to dispel all
the doubts with respect to it, but propose to
offer with due circumspection, a few reflections
that may throw some light on the subject
as obscure as it is important: I hope that on
reading them, it will be readily perceived that
my only aim has been the desire & hope of being
useful

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General Characters

The Yellow Fever presents some principal features, essential phenomena, inseparable & distinct from the Disease, that the difference of place may attenuate but can never entirely destroy.

1st It is not capable of developing itself but in a certain determinate temperature

2^d It is circumscribed particularly in the temperate Zone & the bosom of large cities

3^d It does not attack persons who have once had it, provided they do not remove to a

different climate & then again return to the Islands. — These three characters

with the exception of some slight modifications applicable to the climates of the Torrid Zone, as well as to those of the Temperate, make the Yellow Fever a Disease of itself.

Symptoms of the Yellow Fever

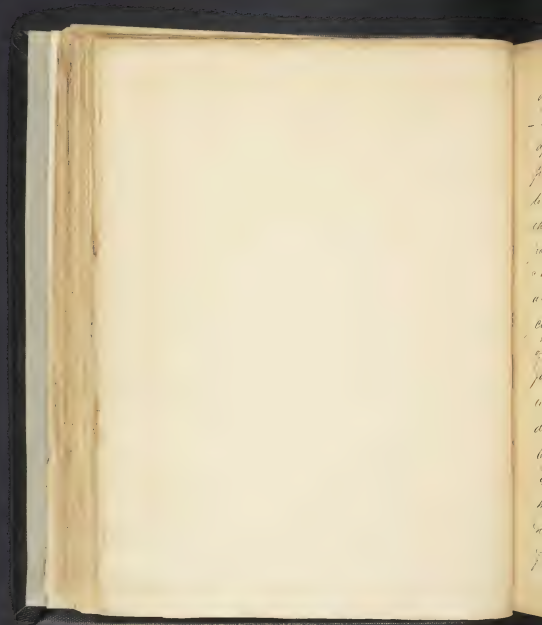
Although the Yellow Fever runs its course

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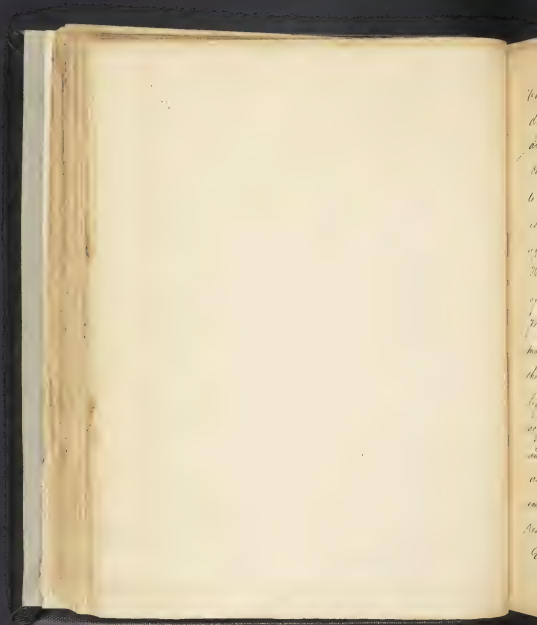
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council. The names are given in alphabetical order of their surnames. The names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council are given in alphabetical order of their surnames. The names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council are given in alphabetical order of their surnames.

in a short time, as it nevertheless is gradual to distinguish in its march two periods marked by symptoms peculiar to each of them; In the first period we observe at the commencement a general & common affection of the, physical & intellectual faculties by which the Mis moribus and the spirits are suddenly prostrated; Terror is depicted in the countenance; this is particularly manifested by deep & distressed sighs; more violent vomiting is observed rather uneasy (than painful), in the region of the stomach; this they generally flatter themselves can be relieved by vomiting. — Although the colour of the skin is particularly that of the face is sometimes red & fiery, the pulse is scarcely more frequent than usual; drawings never fails to succeed.

The pulse has been known to beat but forty pulsations in a minute. This phenomenon usually makes its appearance about the third or fourth

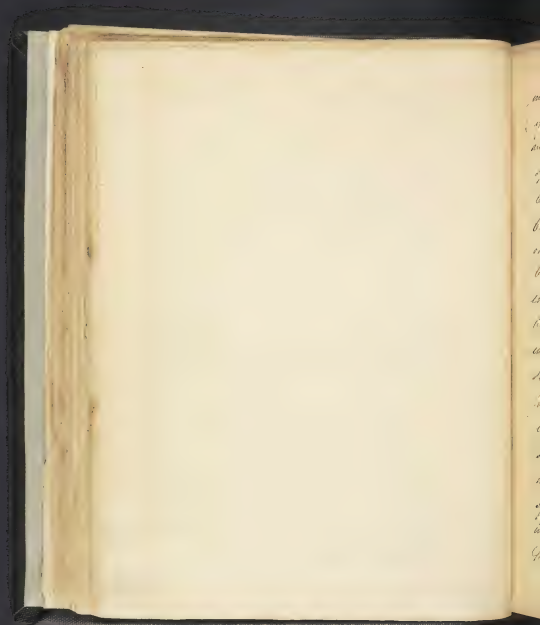


day. It now appears that the Arterial System by its want of elasticity forbids the approaching decomposition of the Constitutive principles of the blood. one would be induced to believe that it was not a blood but some that circulated in the Arteries. dotted & parts same at intervals are lost in the Lungs, some vessels of the eyes & in the nose & the rest & although then & even at times the Patient to cry out they do not recover him from the effects of Comatose affection into which he is plunged; when he is spoken to he replies with difficulty his eyes wander & he appears distressed, the light is intolerant to him, the vessels of the Conjunctiva are engorged, the Gums become dry & an attempt to open his mouth his under-lip trembles & with difficulty he can put out his tongue which is dimly found increased with a conscious shiver.

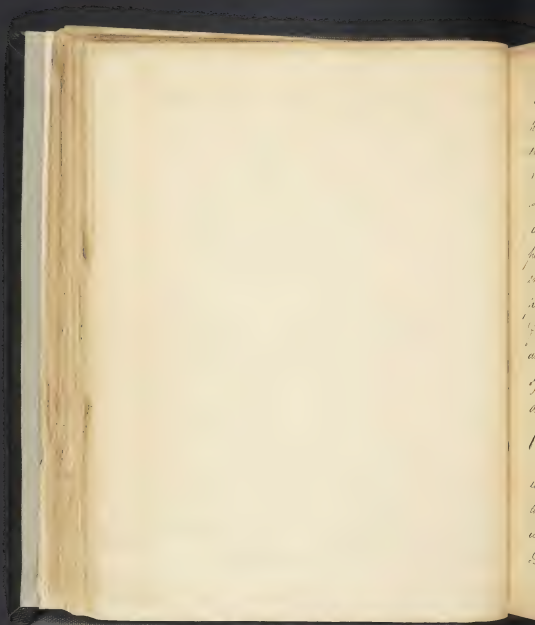


ordered in yellow colour & although it is
the Patient is not thirsty, and if you
attempt to force him to drink, you cause him
considerable uneasiness, and often provoke him
to vomit.

Second Period In proportion
as the Disease progresses, the symptoms become
aggravated & the second period commences. Soon
Humbled from this & take place, streaks
of a yellowish colour are observed towards the
Nathanael of the Carotid & Temporal Arteries, the
most extraordinary pulsation, which denote
their extreme dilatation; vomiting takes place, the
Stomach and matter thrown up from the Stomach
acquire gradually a deeper colour. The oesophagus
and Throat are painfully affected with the sharp
and caustic taste, which accompany them, &
immediately after, are seen blackish flakes
resembling coffee grounds, floating in the mid-
dle of the slimy water. The yellowness of

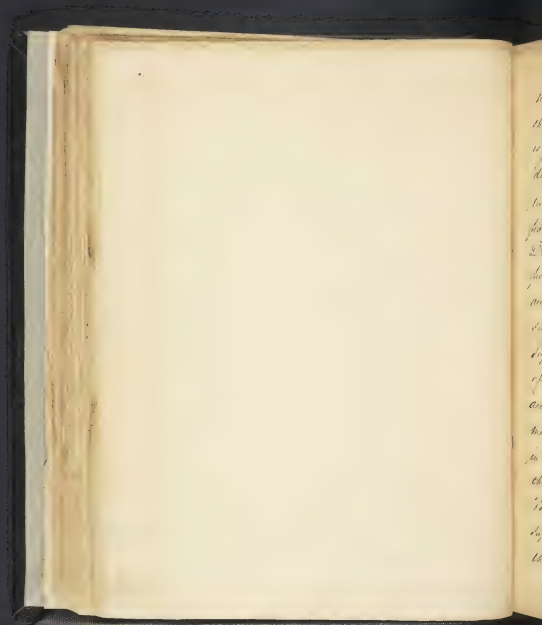


increases rapidly; the suppuration of a Plethora
 (if one has been applied) changes also in Nature
 and Colour. The Urine ceases to flow, & dis-
 spots a white on the surface; & the reds a ve-
 getable crust. Sometimes faint & all coloured;
 but often, red & violet, makes ^{its} appearance
 on the face & chest. The Urine becomes
 black & bloody on heat, then flows from
 the excretory immunities & discoloured & just
 blood, and the Patient severely sinks under
 the Disease about the Fourth or sixth day;
 such are the symptoms that the Yellow Fever
 presents. It is scarcely necessary to observe
 that difference of Constitution, peculiar circum-
 stances depending on, places, Weather & Seasons
 may present some alterations and give place to
 symptoms out of the common rule. In some
 individuals the signs of irritation & of plethora
 have been known to be protracted until the

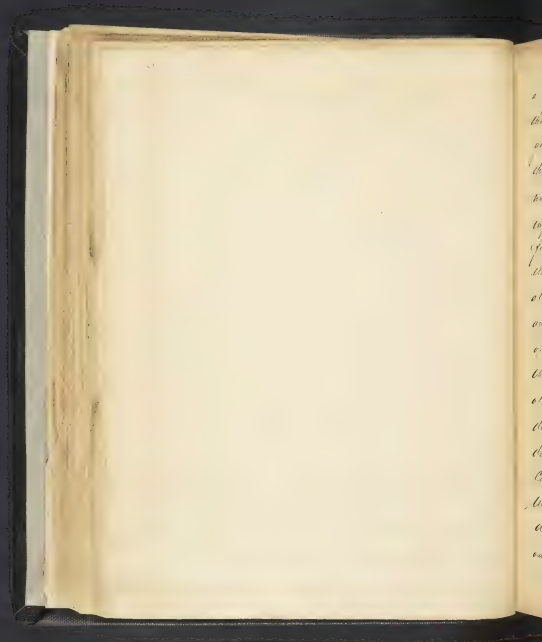


seventh day, this observation has been made
 particularly at the commencement or termination of
 the Epidemic - Similar to all the other dis-
 easements of the Animal economy, the Yellow
 Fever has symptoms which are common to it
 with other Diseases, and others which are
 peculiar to itself. Those which appear as
 exclusively to belong to it, are, the return of the
 pulse to its natural state about the third or
 fourth day, the black vomit, the shortness
 and total suppression of the Urine; these three
 symptoms which indicate the most violent
 degree of the Disease are so much the more
 formidable & fatal as they become concentrated.

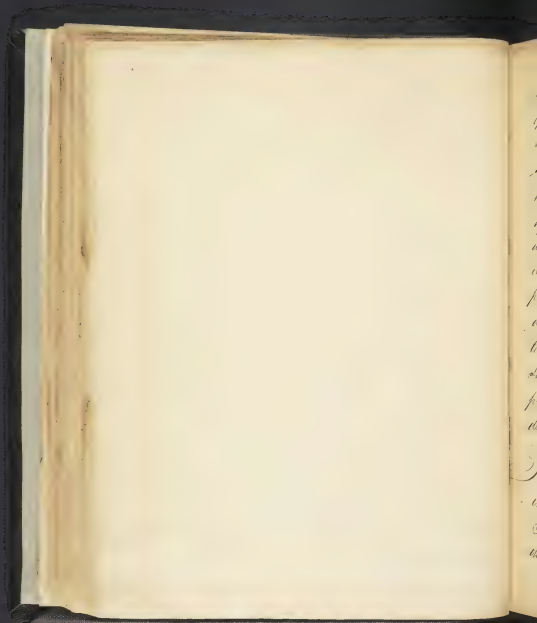
The name of Yellow-Fever under which it
 is known has the disadvantage of presenting
 to the mind but one idea, Phenomenon teaches
 us nothing respecting the nature & seat of the
 Disease. The name of fever essentially



Nervous & malignant appears to me so much
 the most proper, to give an exact idea of it. It
 is generally agreed to thus call all fevers of a
 dangerous character. If this qualification is
 truly that which best accords with them, it is
 particularly to the Yellow Fever, as an essential
 Disease of the Nervous System, that it is
 peculiarly applicable: indeed it is difficult to
 account for this variety of symptoms the in-
 suggestion of which seems impossible, without
 supposing a general & extraordinary alteration
 of the vital principle; How otherwise to
 account for the simultaneous appearance of so
 many frightful symptoms that are met with
 in this Disease, the result of which is always
 the decomposition of the Animal economy. The
 Tinitus, Hemorrhages, the yellowness & the
 delirium & the Urine are but the effects of
 them. It is not because the Stomach contains



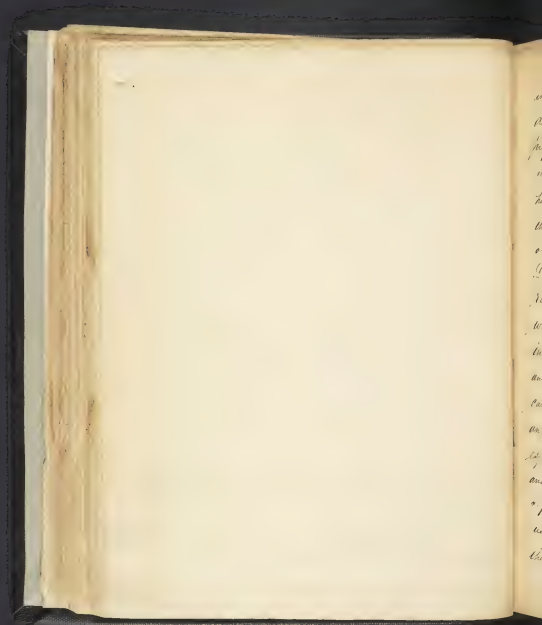
a Salient slimy mucous, that it rejects even, though that is taken in to it; it is not owing to a too great quantity of blood, & its affluence to the Head that we must attribute the Hemorrhage; it is not to the overflowing of the Bile that we should impute the yellowness of the skin; it is not in fine, is a local defect of the Urinary Passages that we can explain the suppression of the Urine; all these symptoms should be considered as an inevitable consequence of the direct action of the vital principle, & the disarrangement of the equilibrium between the Nervous & the other systems. Were it to be asked how this disarrangement operates, it would be to be shown the violent character, the principal cause of the destruction of the equilibrium, it would be necessary to enter into theoretical details susceptible of much controversy without perhaps throwing any light whatever.



on the Disease itself. For, whoever has had an opportunity of observing this Disease, its nature is admitted & rejected by reasons for and against, supported & combatted by systematized opinions, high & great matter &c. much medicine - &c. It appears to me not difficult to, conceive a Cause which acts on the Nervous system without carrying its action on the other systems, until the vital principle sorely wounded, can no longer direct the functions of the other organs. From that time the animal economy falls into a confusion so much the more Anarchical; as the impellent principle is, wounded, & the causes which derange it, are numerous & powerful.

Results of Post-Mortem-Examinations

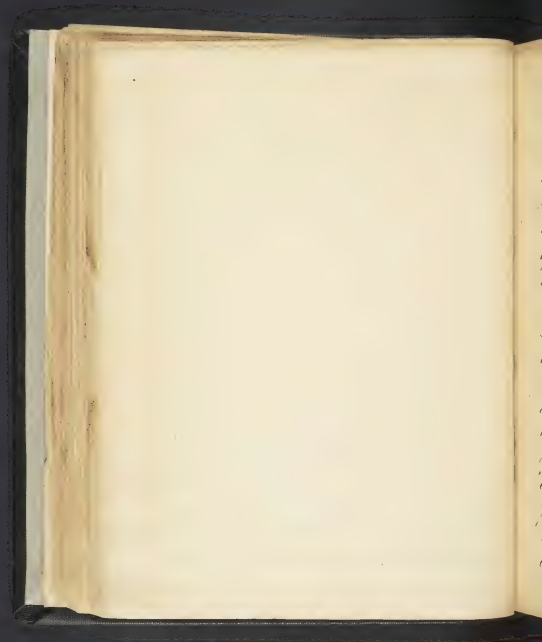
The opening of Bodies, comes to the support of this reasoning; this inspection demonstrates that,



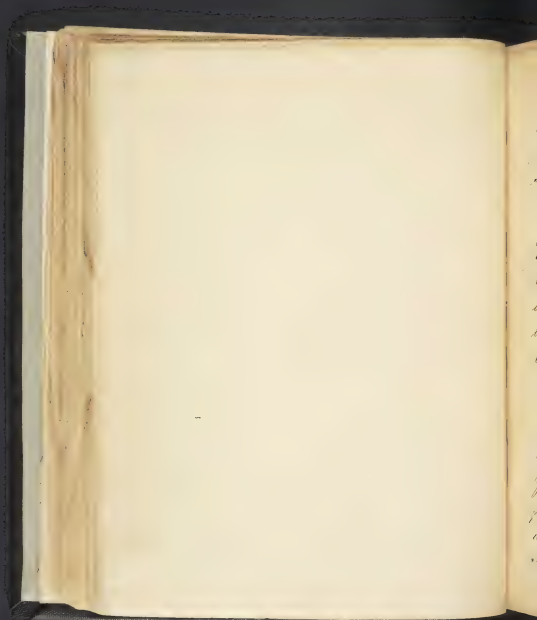
it is not such and such a Function that is
 changed; such or such a Humour, vitiated in
 reference to another, Vitiates the whole of the Animal-
 economy that is attacked & the entire mass of the
 Humours, corrupted. - It is to this principal Cause
 that we must impute the variations that are
 observed in the march & in the effects of this
 Disease; variations which are evidently the
 result of the more or less intimate connection
 which on account of the peculiar Constitution of each
 individual, exists between the Nervous system,
 and the other Organs. The stomach & intestinal
 canal in some, indeed, are distended & loaded by
 an inflammable & foetid gas, their membranes
 especially the internal one, strewed with livid
 and sanguinous specks; in others the Liver
 • often is considerably more voluminous than
 usual; the Vesicle of the gall bladder with
 the other Biliary Canals sometimes obstructed by

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Black Bile which is thick & viscous sometimes
 containing a small quantity of a green & extremely
 fluid liquor. On inspection of the Bladder, it
 is always found empty when there is a suppur-
 ation of Urine, & also that of the Redness, which
 alone appears to be a little decayed: all these
 do not explain the Phenomena. In the Chest
 especially when this Cavity has been particularly
 attacked, emphysema of the pleura, of the
 • (Pecidiastinum), and sometimes Black spots in the
 Lungs; an incision made into this viscous, a
 brown & stannous Humour flows out instead of a
 red & frothy Blood; the Pericardium is filled
 with a purulent serous & acquires sometimes
 a prodigious size; the ventricles of the Heart
 and the Arterial vessels are more relaxed & are
 less elastic, their texture is softer and more
 flabby and gives way at the slightest touch;
 this important organ appears to be in a state



of Macerations. In the Brain the sinusses
contain a deeper coloured blood than usual; there
are sometimes found blood effusions under its
envelopes; in Gine, the whole mucous Membr.
is saturated with a yellow-serosity, similar
to that which runs from the surrounding parts
of a scorified Carbuncle; all these symptoms
are not common & are not ordinary, not well
concentrated, but in few cases. In some
I repeat it, it is the Stomach that is affected,
in others the Chest or Head; however these
circumstances are not to be considered as certain,
and if it was an affection that should be
thought general, it would be the inflammation
of the Stomach in consequence of the frequent
'vomiting' to which the principal number of
Patients are subject. However this symptom
has sometimes failed; I have known Patients
to die who had had Hemorrhoids, yellowness

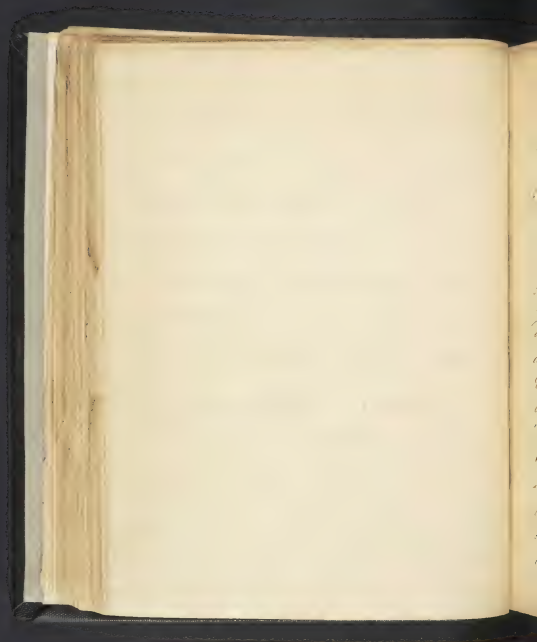


suppression of Urine & so great an obstruction
as to be suffocated without, having experienced
any nausea or inclination to vomit & even so
stomachs were in their natural state.

In reflecting on the phenomena that the
Yellow Fever presents it is astonishing what
an analogy is discovered between it &
the scarus; all the difference (and doubtless
it is considerable) consists in the one amount
to a crisis in seven & even in four days, whilst
the other requires four & sometimes seven months.

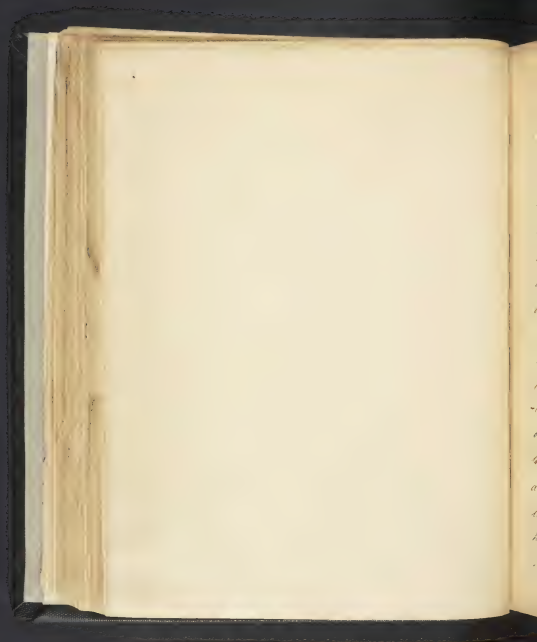
Causes of Yellow-Fever

After having described the symptoms that
characterise it with a knowledge of yellow
fever, we must enquire the causes which
produce it. This subject is so much the
important, as it interests both a Country, & the
Administration; the former in pointing out the



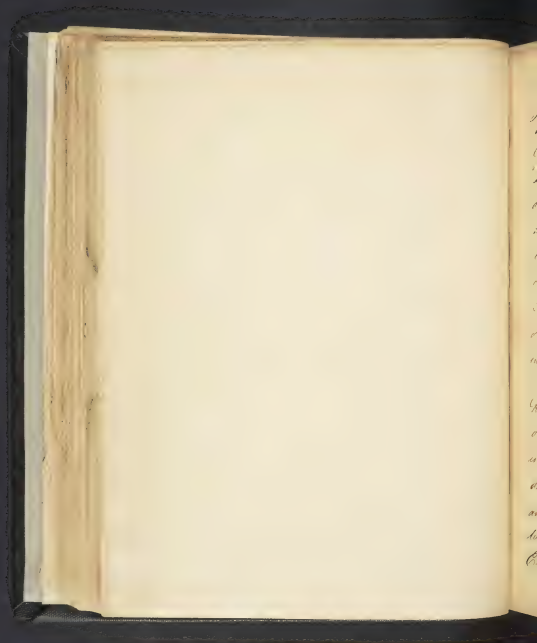
most efficacious means to combat it, & the latter
to devise and establish such regulations as will
tend to prevent its introduction. Before proceeding
further it will be well to recollect two proposi-
tions, admitted in Natural Philosophy and
demonstrated to be true by experience & observation.

The first is, that a too powerful heat protracted
for a length of time, affects changes & modifies
the Constitution of all Persons not accustomed to
it: the second is, that the air may be so altered
and vitiated as to cause not only dangerous diseases,
but also the most sudden death: as appears
by some examples the birds & insects being destroyed.
Experience has taught us that in cloudy weather
the Thermometer of Fahrenheit rises to 80° in the
shade & continues at this point for some time.
The Animal Economy becomes more or less deranged
in consequence of the momentary abstraction of the other
causes which may augment or abate this change.



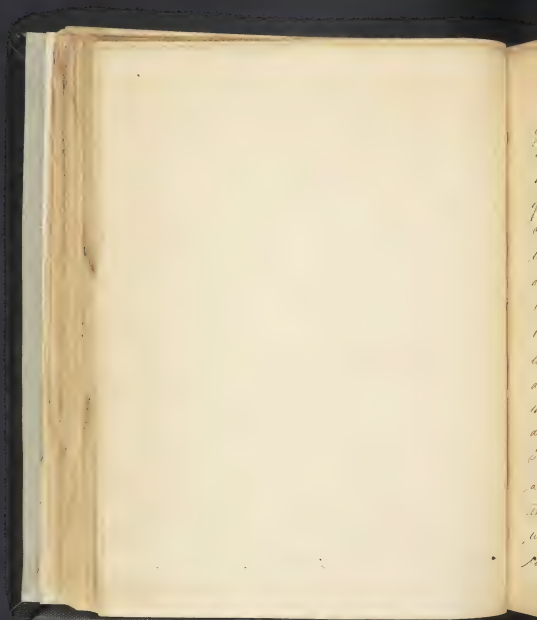
ment: Consider how vast the effects of the Great
 Whiteness may be in process - for some they are
 extensive, then extensive is inevitable. The reason
 by the accounts of Travellers that under the sun
 & air comes it is constant at this advice as high as
 who receive there in a short time is exposed to
 dangerous diseases; such is inevitable the fact that
 attends him in the West Indies, at Malacca, Cayenne,
 in the Eastern & Southern Parts of Africa &c.

It appears absolutely necessary in a person to
 live under that Climate provided he is not very
 thin must increase his principles by a modifica-
 tion of his system. It is scarcely necessary to
 observe that the effect being always in proportion
 to the cause, in London where the heat is moderate
 and temperate, as in the West Indies & at Malacca;
 the Diseases which result from an indolent &
 modification of the system are in a more dangerous
 nature and last longer at all seasons of the

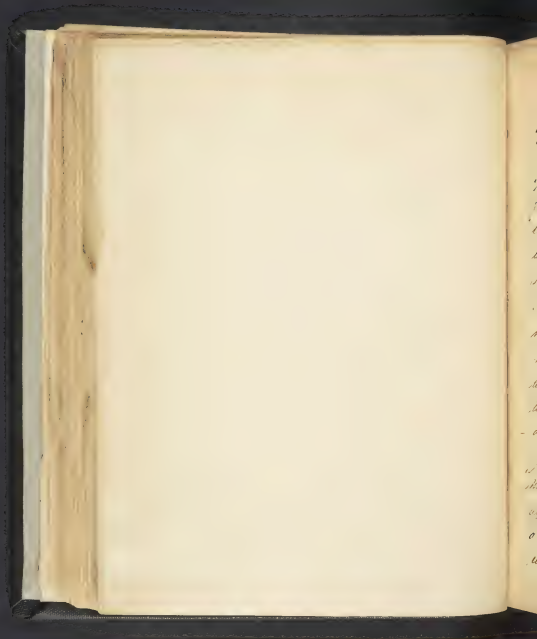


year. The climate is better; more elevated, although situated under the same sun. They are more full of life according to the season indicated, and the season of the year when it is affected; thus by a certain consequence, which I should not make them discover, as the temperate does until the sun has arrived at his highest point of elevation. There is, indeed, too great an under the sun. It produces in the almost entire absence of these plants, they should cease at the same time, in fact they do in the United States & in Europe.

In the United States the system of agriculture known to succeed everywhere, is not less the same usually as soon as the first frost appears. It is well known that although the States of Florida & Cuba are situated under the same latitude, and are subject during winter to extreme cold weather, even more severe than is experienced in Europe under the same latitude, the latter has

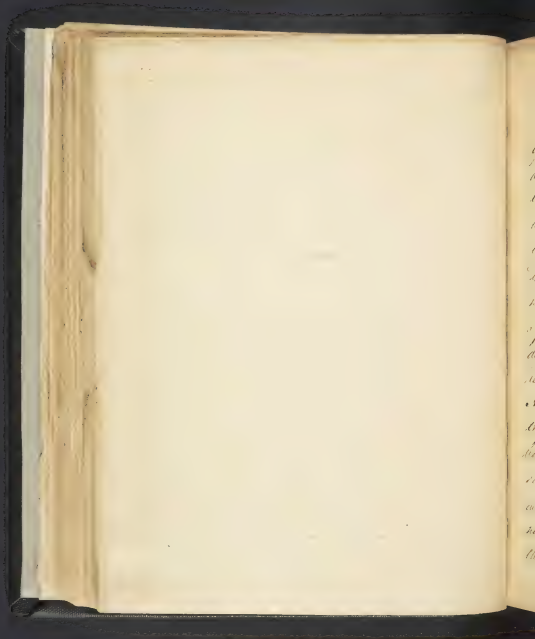


is felt there even in our West Indies some years
 ago Fahrenheit's Thermometer stood at 86° this
 was however but of short duration; the heat
 although excessive in the United States, it not
 of such long continuance as in the Islands. The
 change of the seasons, the force & violence of the
 winds, the sudden variations of the thermometer
 on so many natural & geometrical means to regulate
 the effects of the weather. I do not believe
 that the Yellow Fever in the temperate zones, is
 the result of heat alone, however, however, the
 action may be there; I repeat it, it has not in
 those climates the same duration, nor does it
 occur there the same distinctly as it does in the
 "Tropical Zones." It ought to be considered solely as
 a general & pre-disposing cause without which
 the others could not develop themselves, but which
 united & combined with a multitude of local causes
 constitutes this terrible pestilence which so often



Has made such tremendous havoc in several
of the large & seaport towns in the United States.

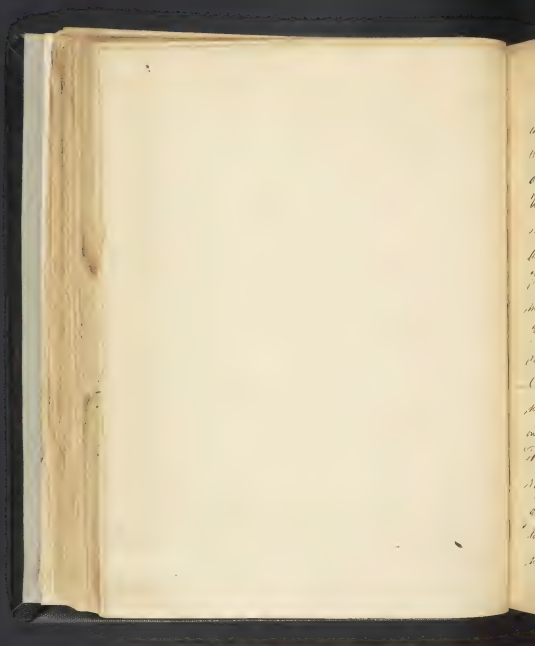
I do not believe that the yellow fever is a
miasmatic disease susceptible of being transported
from one place to another, on the contrary I believe
that we should regard it as generally attached
to the place ^{where} it develops itself. From this
I conclude that those countries which do not
sustain the course capable of development, do not
communicate any thing to fear from their vicin-
ity; but in places where every thing concurs
to give it a powerful energy, it is impossible
to misjudge, in its epidemic-contagious char-
acter; this objection does not accord with the
yellow fever, it is not in the presence of a
material virus, not capable of communication
by the touch, is necessary. But it exists to
a limit in the class, a rare extraordinary disease
which has a focus; although circumscribed in



its limits from whence it disposes itself, powerful
 causes which nourish it a great deal more & which
 effects all its power found in the Circle of its activity
 and that it is impossible to move it otherwise
 than by itself, the cause. God has given it
 to the Yellow Fever, not alone, but to wherever
 the vehicle & the means which serve to propagate
 it. I should remind you that the Epidemic & miasmatic
 nature of the Yellow Fever of the Dominick Isles, is
 a quality that is not found, & peculiar to the same
 degree, in the Yellow Fever of the Slave Coast. The
 reason of this phenomenon is owing & belongs to the
 • Atmospheric air, which should be regarded as
 the principal agent of its communication & which
 being less vitiated in the Islands, by the ab-
 sence of the local causes which alter its principle,
 in the Colonies, constitutes the difference which exists
 not only in those who are acclimated, but also in
 those who are not acclimated. I will not attempt



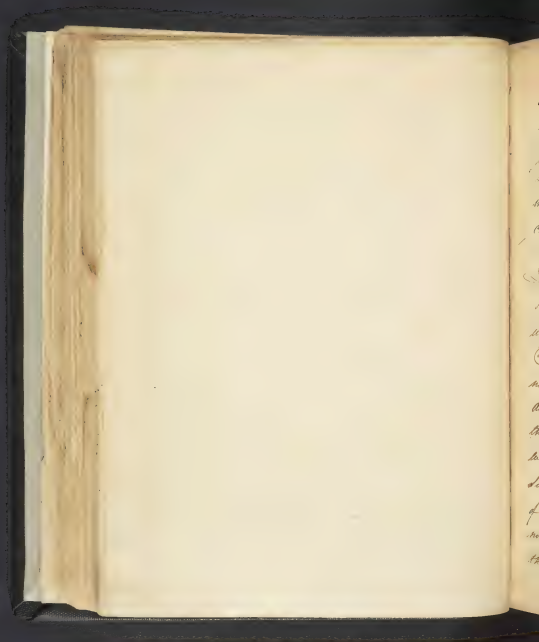
to support the idea that this disease is invariable
because of the primitive Character of a Disease
may be easily determined by observation, it is not
the same case with the various deaths in distant
Places: at different times of the year, when they
are the particular result of a multitude of causes
and circumstances, whose combination might vary
ad infinitum. However there are ^{more} marked traits
in one Country than another, of this number is the
Epidemic Contagious Character (which is not an
exclusive trait inherent in the Yellow Fever
of the United States, in fact, although in the
Continents of America it seldom or never continues, be-
yond three or four months after the first appearance, the number
of Persons who die of it, is much greater than in the
Islands where it continues, with more or less violence
the whole year; in the United States its appearance
is the signal for the cessation of all other Fevers,
in the Islands it excludes none: but Fevers of



residence in an infected City in the United States,
 is sufficient to take the disease; in the Islands,
 there are no well authenticated accounts of a fatal
 communication taking place there. In the
 United States the Yellow Fever principally prevails in the
 Independent Cities, on those who are born there;
 whereas, in the Islands the French & Acclimated
 Persons have always been exempt from it; we
 must therefore infer from this, that in the temperate
 Zones it owes its principal existence to local and
 accidental causes which give it the Epidemic &
 Catagorical Character, a Character characteristic
 perhaps for its development, depending entirely
 on localities & peculiar Circumstances which determine
 it, & to which one must particularly attribute the
 rapidity with which it is propagated and the
 great number of Persons who have fallen victims
 to it. In the Islands the Yellow Fever has
 never been considered a disease susceptible of

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being propagated by proximity or Contact.—
 During the American Revolution more than Three
 thousand Patients was distributed in the different
 Hospitals at Cape Henric, the Yellow Fever
 appeared more or less in all, without acquiring
 in any the Contagious Character; by the death of a
 person dying of this Disease was seen another
 Affected with Dysentery or Diarrhoea, without
 Fever. Having the least effect whatever upon the
 latter; this is a circumstance I have frequently
 witnessed in the Hospitals at Havana and in
 several of the Windward Islands. Although I
 found in believing that the Cause, of which I
 have already spoken an sufficient for the
 development of the Yellow Fever, & that it is
 useful to recur to the system of importation, yet
 I will not deny that a Hospital whose Crew is
 attacked by this Disease, the all from the Field,
 of which is vitiated by the fermentation of the



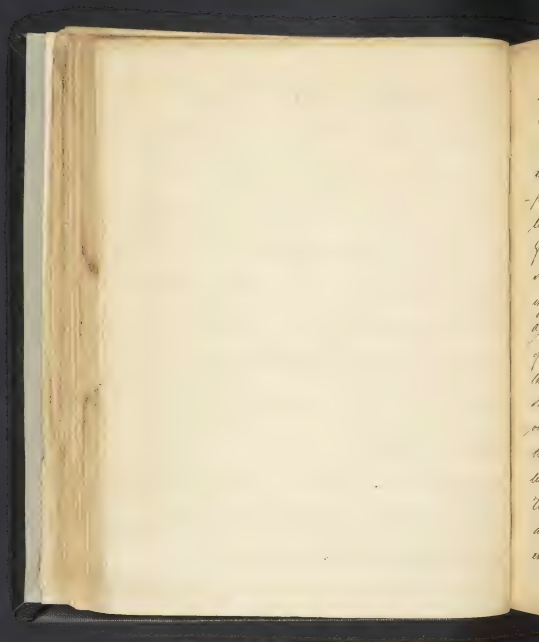
articles that compose the Garg, arriving in a
 body subject to this cutaneous, at a season of the
 year the most favourable for its development,
 may be a means of propagating it; undoubtedly
 in this as in all other Diseases, the effect becomes
 cause in its turn.

Diagnosis & Prognosis

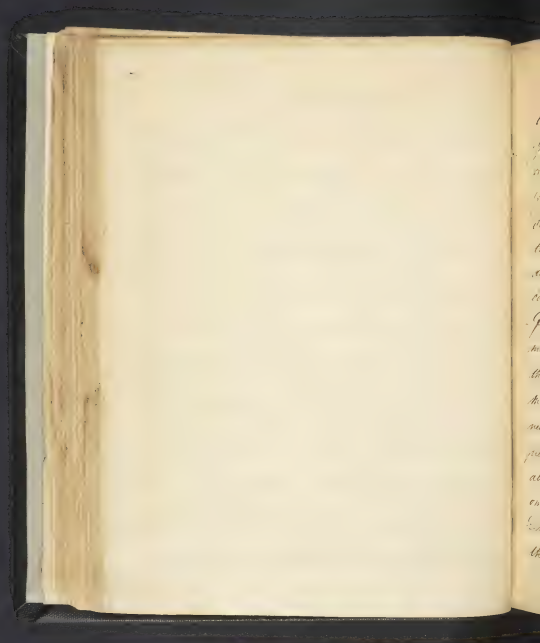
The impotency of the Healing art was never,
 unfortunately, more evident than in this Disease.
 I do not believe that it is owing to its nature
 not being understood, but to the violence of the
 disease that we must attribute the inefficiency of
 the aids that Medicine furnishes. — It is not for
 want of boldness that Physicians have not
 succeeded in arresting its devastations. The Difficulty
 of the doctrines of Stahl, Cullen & Boerhaave, have
 not been more formidable than those who adopted
 the doctrines of Brown, have succeeded in getting

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Every practitioner who has treated Patients labouring under the Yellow Fever, has cured some and lost a great number; and if from the inability of his many efforts, a single truth should be elicited, it would be that of the acknowledged inefficiency of all the Theria against a Disease which presents so many shades of difference. I will not attempt to point out an exclusive remedy, a treatment applicable to all cases, the Disease forbids it but I will mention what remedies have been administered & what I think should be done. The Disease is some years more fatal than others; I have witnessed & studied the influence of the Local & accidental Causes on the Firmness of the Constitution; this study, recommended by the Father of Medicine in one of his immortal works, is certainly of the greatest importance. If in all Countries it constitutes an essential part of the Healing art, it is particularly so in the United States, where



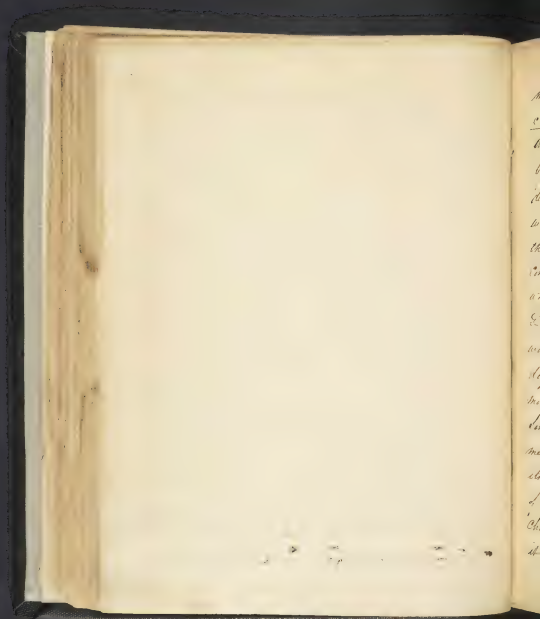
every thing is so different from what it is in
 Europe; it is of consequence then to the progress
 of this act, to the reputation & glory of the Physician
 to pay strict attention to the changes of the Atmos-
 -phere, to Compare the degrees of heat of one year
 with another, to observe the quantity of rain, the
 force & variation of the winds, the quality of the
 soil we inhabit & the nature of the Trees surround-
 ing it, to reflect on fact, on the influence all these
 agents have on the Animal economy. The Cause
 of the Disease is more or less fatal, according to
 the situation of the place persons inhabit, the
 season of the year when he is attacked, the
 occupation he follows, particularly the state of
 the mind. In the Epidemics which I have
 witnessed in the Islands as well as those in the
 United States, I have always observed some
 degree of difference between ^{them,} which without
 entirely changing the Character of the Disease



recommend nevertheless a modification in the
 treatment. The predominant symptoms of the
 Yellow Fever in the Islands are generally hem-
 orrhages from the Nose, lived spots on the skin
 followed by cold clammy sweats, "Green Stool"
 death, the "Yellowness of the skin", inconsiderable
 the black vomit occurs but in a few instances
 and the suppuration of the Urine is a rare rare
 circumstance. In the year 1794 the Yellow
 Fever made its appearance in St. Domingo in a
 most malignant form, attacking principally
 the British troops who had made themselves
 masters of part of the Island; a general yellow-
 ness over the whole body & hemorrhages were the
 prevailing symptoms, both made their appearance
 about the 4th or 7th day & were considered bad
 omens; the pulse at the commencement of the
 Disease was frequent; the skin previous to death
 there was observed about the third day on feeling



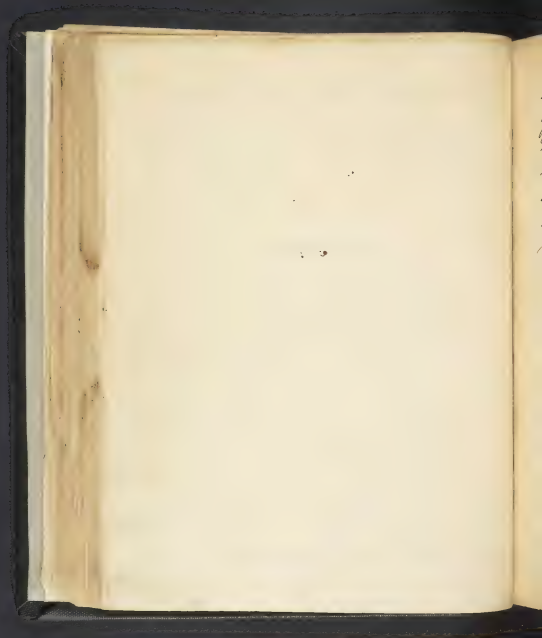
the poles, a kind of gaseous distillation of which
 I have already spoken. In a few moderate
 bleedings according to the Constitution of the Patients
 were considered beneficial; some good effects
 were obtained from the vegetable Mineral Acids,
 also from mild Vomiting, but nothing offered
 greater advantage, than Black given in large doses
 according to circumstances, rendered laxative by
 Cream of Tartar, or one of the Mastic Bals, a more
 lenient & active by Gal Annoniac, Sassa & Virginian
 snake root combined; this treatment did not
 succeed so well at Port-au-Prince, where the
 thermometer here was scarcely, hence the doubt
 less on account of a less favourable situation;
 there were but few cases at Mirebalais, a Parish
 situated in very elevated Table Land, where
 the air is pure & the heat moderate, circumstances
 which prove that this Disease loses its strength
 and malignity in proportion as the places are



man, a deep elevated & cool that persons inhabiting
came observations on the Treatment. In
 the year 1708 Cape Francois was severely visited
 by the yellow fever, from July to Feb^r, persons
 died daily, those who survived an attack of it
 were for a long time troubled with obstructions of
 the abdominal viscera & had a long & painful
 convalescence. This epidemic differed from that
 which was experienced at the same time at St
 Domingo by the duration of the Disease which
 was prolonged until the eleventh or twentieth
 day & sometimes even until the twentieth, by a
 more frequent & strong pulse, by the marked &
 sensible intermittent character as the common
 ment of the Disease, obscure & almost effaciated
 its Condition; but with attention, the traces
 of it could be readily recognised; often the
 character was not perceptible at the pulse, but
 it could be distinguished by the constant return



of some symptom such as Lowness, Vomiting,
 Lightheadedness or a more Considerable uneasiness &
 agitation; Tepid Baths, diluent-drinks, mild
 aperitives, an Emetic about the third day, con-
 tinued in moderate doses for some time, were
 the principal remedies which proved to operate
 favourably in many instances; great Benefit
 was derived from Prussian Barks given alone a
 Rendred Efficacy by one of the Theriaca. Salts
 according to the indication. Some patients vom-
 ited in small quantities occasionally, small Habs,
 of a brown viscidous matter, there was some
 Yellowness, but little Hemorrhage, & no suppres-
 sion of the Urine, excepting that which depended
 on the stony of the Bladder which was soon
 relieved on the introduction of a Sonde: there
 were observed in their place Considerable Com-
 less affections, Incessant, subsiding tenderness
 and a disposition to sweat at the end of



each, however, an evacuation which was
 favorable & critical when it was general,
 hot, profuse & resulting from the reaction; but
 injurious, fatal & foreboding the death of the
 Patient when it was cold, partial, viscous
 and resulting from the weakness of the
 nervous & vascular systems. —

Phila. Dec. 1st March 1825

M^r. Adams

